Weapons of Mass Destruction

1077. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether an independent commission of the United Nations seeking to end the threat posed by Weapons of Mass Destruction has recommended that all nuclear weapons States including India, Pakistan, US and China ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); and

(b) if so, Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) The Swedish Government established in December 2003 a Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission. The Commission was headed by Dr. Hans Blix, former Director-General of IAEA, and included 15 members from different countries. The Commission published a report in May 2006 which *inter alia* included a recommendation that "all states that have not already done so should sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty unconditionally and without delay".

(b) On different occasions, India has stated that it will not stand in the way of the Entry into Force of the Treaty. India is already in *de facto* observance of the spirit of the Treaty by maintaining the unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosive testing.

Indians in Pakistani and Bangladeshi Jails

1078. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian nationals in various jails outside India and the number out of them languishing in Pakistani and Bangladeshi jails till the month of June 2006;

(b) the number out that of them were fishermen who crossed over to Pakistani territory and were taken as prisoners by the Pakistani authorities;

(c) the number of them who are in jails for more than fifteen years; and

(d) the steps Government have initiated to bring them back home as early as possible?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) According to information available, 136 civilian prisoners, 412 fishermen and 74 POWs are in Pakistani jails. In

Bangladesh, 380 Indians are facing imprisonment. As far as number of Indian nationals in various jails outside India is concerned, the requisite information is being collected from our Missions and posts abroad.

(c) According to information available, 59 Indian POWs and 41 civilian prisoners have been in Pakistan jails for more than 15 years.

(d) Government has taken up the matter of release of all the prisoners with Governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh and all possible measures are being taken to secure the release of these Indian nationals.

Amendment in the Migration Bill

1079. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that US Administration is going to amend the Migration Bill which removes restrictions on allowing nurses into the USA;

(b) if so, the details of the proposed amendment by US Administration to the Migration Bill; and

(c) the manner in which this would help India to send more and more nurses to US and occupy the first place by dethroning Philippines which is standing first?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) The US House of Representatives and Senate have passed a version of legislation amending the US Immigration and Nationality Act in December 2005 and May 2006 respectively.

(b) The final text of the legislation has yet to emerge from the conference process that would reconcile the two versions.

(c) The Senate version of the Bill provides Indian nursing professionals a greater opportunity to work in the US health services sector.

National Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers

1080. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the genesis and objective of the National Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers;

(b) when was this scheme launched and since then how much total